Law Department PO Box 9777 Federal Way, Washington 98063-9777 Air Express: 33663 Weyerhacuser Way South Federal Way, WA 98003

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April 1, 2003

TO:

NAME:

Examiner Everett White

FIRM:

USPTO

LOCATION:

Group Art Unit 1623

FAX NUMBER:

703-746-5093

TEL NUMBER:

FROM:

NAME:

Keith Gehr

MAIL ADDRESS:

Law Department - Intellectual Property

Weyerhaeuser Company - CH 1J27

PO Box 9777

Federal Way WA 98063-9777

TEL NUMBER:

253/924-2997

FAX NUMBER:

253/924-3253

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Examiner Everett White Group Art Unit 1623 Serial No. 09/875,177 Filed June 6, 2001

Informal Discussion Points for Phone Interview on April 2 at 2pm EST

There appear to be two major points that should be addressed in the Office Action mailed March 13. The first is the indefiniteness rejection for the use of the phrase "latent sources of chlorine dioxide". The second is whether the hypochlorite compound in the cited Besemer patent is in fact a latent source of chlorine dioxide.

Applicants will address the first point by noting that the chemistry of chlorine dioxide formation is well known, certainly within the pulp industry. Alkali metal chlorites and chlorates are standard recognized precursors of chlorine dioxide. In particular, alkali metal chlorites would be especially suitable latent sources in the context of the present invention.

The pulp industry throughout the world has made huge efforts to eliminate hypochlorites as bleaching agents. However, until the present these have been standard secondary oxidants in formation of carboxylated cellulose using various nitroxide compositions as primary oxidants. Applicants would note that the emphasis of the present invention has been on a process that totally *eliminates* the need for hypochlorites in this reaction. This should be very evident in the Title; in the broad statement of the invention at page 1, lines 9-11; in the Summary at page 8, lines 6-7; and at other locations in the specification. With the understanding that no hypochlorite is used by Applicants, it is a far stretch to presume that the hypochlorite used by Besemer could be a latent source of chlorine dioxide. Further the chemistry is such that hypochlorites are not chemical precursors of chlorine dioxide. The chemistry simply doesn't work that way. One cannot in any practical way make chlorine dioxide from hypochlorites.

Applicants will be pleased to show standard published references regarding preparation of chlorine dioxide from alkali metal chlorites as well as references showing the impractibality of forming chlorine dioxide from hypochlorites, if that would be helpful to the Examiner.

Applicants are certainly open to answer questions of the Examiner or to suggestions that might help expedite prosecution.

Keith Gehr Agent for Applicants